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EXAMINER

BETT, JACOB F

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 3 March 2009 has been entered.

Remarks

2. In response to communications filed on 3 March 2009, claims 1, 12, 19-26 have been amended per the applicant's request. Claims 1-26 are presently pending in the application.

Claim Objections

3. Claims 12-26 objected to because of the following informalities:

Claim 12 recites "computer-readable memory configured to store a computer program". The phrase "configured to" is passively recited so as to draw into question if the memory actually stores the computer program or if it merely has the intended use of doing so. Language that suggests or makes optional but does not require steps to be performed or does not limit a claim to a particular structure does not limit the scope of the claim or the claim limitation. See MPEP 2106 II.C.

Claim 12 also includes the limitation "computer program to" which raises similar issues.

Claims 13-18 are objected to for depending from objected to claim 12.

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Claim 19 recites “code for” performing actions and as such the actions are passively recited. This brings into question whether the actions are actually performed. Language that suggests or makes optional but does not require steps to be performed or does not limit a claim to a particular structure does not limit the scope of the claim or the claim limitation. See MPEP 2106 II.C. If the applicant is attempting to invoke an interpretation of the claims in view of 35 USC §112 sixth paragraph, the applicant is reminded that a claim will only be presumed to invoke 35 USC §112 sixth paragraph if it meets the following: (A) the claim limitations must use the phrase “means for ” or “step for; ” (B) the “means for ” or “step for ” must be modified by functional language; and (C) the phrase “means for ” or “step for ” must not be modified by sufficient structure, material, or acts for achieving the specified function.

Claims 20-25 are objected to for depending from objected to claim 19.

Claim 26 uses the word “assocaited” in line 9. This is the incorrect spelling of the word “associated”. For the purposes of examining it is assumed that it was meant --associated--.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

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5. Claims 1-3, 7, 9-14, 18-21, and 25 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Derek Mathieson, "Implementing Oracle Workflow".

As to claim 1, Mathieson teaches a method performed by a computer system of committing a transaction to a database, the method comprising:

detecting a database transaction between an application and the database at the computer system (see Figure 1, "Creating a Purchase Order", and see Figure 3 "Start");

intercepting transaction data from the database transaction with the computer system prior to the database transaction being committed to the database based on an event monitored by the computer system that is triggered by the database transaction (see pages 9-10, "Document Routing Information", "When a document is assigned to a user, either for signature, or simply for information, the document status is updated.");

creating an electronic record at the computer system from the intercepted transaction data prior to committing the database transaction to the database (see Figure 11 and Figure 12, which display records of status information of documents);

executing a rule associated with the event at the computer system to determine whether an electronic signature is required to connote review of the electronic record created from the intercepted transaction data in order to commit the database transaction to the database (see pages 2-3, "Signature Rights Database", "most financial documents require at least one signature to authorize payment... When the workflow reaches this step in the routing a special stored procedure is called which determines who has the right to sign for the expenditure according to our signature right database");

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requesting the electronic signature using the computer system prior to committing the database transaction to the database based on a determination that an electronic signature is required (see pages 2-3, "Signature Rights Database", "select the first person that has the right to sign and is not absent"); and

committing the database transaction associated with to the database using the computer system in response to receiving the electronic signature (see Figure 3, "End (Approved)").

As to claim 2, Mathieson teaches wherein the electronic record comprises data generated from multiple tables of the database (see Figure 1, information of pull down menus from different tables and see pages 6-7, "Interface to CERN Databases").

As to claim 3, Mathieson teaches wherein the electronic record is stored in a common repository of electronic records that provides an audit trail that cannot be altered or disabled by users of the database (see Figures 11 and 12).

As to claim 7, Mathieson teaches further displaying at least some of the transaction data in the electronic record on a computer display based on the determination that an electronic signature is required (see page 1, "web-based interface").

As to claim 9, Mathieson teaches further comprising obtaining and verifying the electronic signature (see page 2, "authorization password").

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As to claim 10, Mathieson teaches wherein the rule requires a plurality of different electronic signatures and wherein, if execution of the rule results in a determination that a plurality of electronic signatures are required, requesting the plurality of electronic signatures prior to committing the data to the database (see page 3, “at least one signature to authorize payment”).

As to claim 11, Mathieson teaches wherein, if the electronic signature is rejected or otherwise cannot be obtained, the database transaction is rolled-back and not committed to the database (see Figure 3, "End (Rejected)").

As to claim 12. (Currently amended) A computer system that manages electronic records stored in a database, the computer system comprising:

a processor; a database (see page 1, “Client-Server application and see pages 6-7, Interface to CERN Databases); and

a computer-readable memory coupled to the processor, the computer-readable memory configured to store a computer program (see page 1, “Client-Server application”);

wherein the processor is operative with the computer program to:

detect a database transaction between an application and the database (see Figure 1, “Creating a Purchase Order”, and see Figure 3 “Start”);

intercept transaction data from the database transaction initiated between the application and the database prior to committing the transaction to the database based on an event monitored by the processor that is triggered by the database transaction (see pages 9-10, “Document

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Routing Information", "When a document is assigned to a user, either for signature, or simply for information, the document status is updated.");

create an electronic record from the intercepted transaction data prior to committing the database transaction to the database (see Figure 11 and Figure 12, which display records of status information of documents);

execute a rule associated with the event record to determine whether an electronic signature is required to connote review of the electronic record created from the intercepted transaction data in order to commit the database transaction to the database (see pages 2-3, "Signature Rights Database", "most financial documents require at least one signature to authorize payment... When the workflow reaches this step in the routing a special stored procedure is called which determines who has the right to sign for the expenditure according to our signature right database"; and

request the electronic signature prior to committing the database transaction to the database based on a determination that an electronic signature is required (see pages 2-3, "Signature Rights Database", "select the first person that has the right to sign and is not absent"); and

commit the database transaction to the database in response to receiving the electronic signature (see Figure 3, "End (Approved)").

As to claim 13, the applicant is directed to the citations for claim 2 above.

As to claim 14, the applicant is directed to the citations for claim 3 above.

As to claim 18, the applicant is directed to the citations for claim 9 above.

As to claim 19, Mathieson teaches a computer-readable storage medium configured to store computer-executable code for managing electronic records stored in a database, the computer-readable storage medium comprising:

code for detecting initiating a database transaction between an application and the database (see Figure 1, "Creating a Purchase Order", and see Figure 3 "Start");

code for monitoring an event that is triggered by the database transaction (see Figure 11 and Figure 12, which display records of status information of documents);

code for intercepting transaction data from the database transaction prior to the database transaction being committed to the database based on the event that is triggered by the database transaction (see pages 9-10, "Document Routing Information", "When a document is assigned to a user, either for signature, or simply for information, the document status is updated.");

code for creating an electronic record from the intercepted transaction data prior to committing the database transaction to the database (see Figure 11 and Figure 12, which display records of status information of documents);

code for executing a rule associated with the event to determine whether an electronic signature is required to connote review of the electronic record created from the intercepted database transaction in order to commit the database transaction to the database (see pages 2-3, "Signature Rights Database", "most financial documents require at least one signature to authorize payment... When the workflow reaches this step in the routing a special stored procedure is called which determines who has the right to sign for the expenditure according to our signature right database"; and

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code for requesting the electronic signature prior to committing the database transaction to the database based on a determination that that an electronic signature is required (see pages 2-3, “Signature Rights Database”, “select the first person that has the right to sign and is not absent”); and

code for committing the database transaction to the database in response to receiving the electronic signature (see Figure 3, “End (Approved)”).

As to claim 20, Mathieson teaches wherein the code for creating an electronic record further comprises code for creating electronic records in response to the occurrence of a predefined event (see Figure 11 and Figure 12, which display records of status information of documents).

As to claim 21, the applicant is directed to the citations for claim 3 above.

As to claim 25, the applicant is directed to the citations for claim 9 above.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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7. Claims 4-6, 15-17, and 22-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mathieson in view of Bisbee et al. (U.S. patent application publication No. 2001/0002485 A1) and Bertino et al., "Integrating XML and Databases".

Claims 4 and 5 are rejected for the following reasons:

Mathieson fails to expressly disclose the use of XML Documents.

Bisbee et al. teaches the objects being stored as XML documents, see paragraph 0071.

Thus it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use XML as a well-known standard which provides the advantage of being easily supported.

However, it is not expressly stated in the above mentioned references how the data is stored within the database. Bertino et al. teaches the storage of an unstructured XML document as a column of a table as a CLOB data type, see page 86 column 1. Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to include these features as it provides an organized method for storing the xml documents.

Also note, Mathieson teaches using "Oracle Workflow", and the document "Oracle Workflow Release 2.6.2 Business Event System and PL/SQL Development Guidelines" teaches that Oracle Workflow typically uses XML documents as see on page 15.

As to claim 6, Mathieson as modified, teaches wherein XML fields of the data are filled with the transaction data based on a predefined mapping of a data type definition to multiple data sources (see Bisbee et al. and Bertino et al. as cited above, where data in XML files is implicitly formatted using the mapping of a DTD, as the DTD defines how data is mapped and related in an XML file).

As to claim 15, the applicant is directed to the citations for claim 4 above.

As to claim 16, the applicant is directed to the citations for claim 5 above.

As to claim 17, the applicant is directed to the citations for claim 6 above.

As to claim 22, the applicant is directed to the citations for claim 4 above.

As to claim 23, the applicant is directed to the citations for claim 5 above.

As to claim 24, the applicant is directed to the citations for claim 6 above.

8. Claim 8 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mathieson in view of Bisbee et al. and the applicant's admitted prior art (see MPEP §2144.03 C., the applicant's failure to traverse the examiner's assertions in the previous office action are taken to be an admittance of prior art).

As to claim 8, Mathieson does not distinctly disclose wherein the transaction data in the electronic record is displayed according to a predefined layout set forth in an XSL style sheet associated with data comprising a copy of the electronic record as displayed, wherein the data is stored within a column of a database table.

Bisbee et al. teaches XML for formatting the data and having data that contains copies (see paragraph 0100). Thus it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use XML as a well-known standard which provides the advantage of being easily supported.

However, Mathieson as modified by Bisbee et al. still fails to expressly disclose how the data is presented to the user, and the data being stored in tables.

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The applicant has admitted that use of XSL to provide a layout for displaying XML documents and the ability to store data in tables was well known in the art at the time of the invention. Thus it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have modified Mathieson to include these things because XSL is the standard language for determining XML document presentation and storing data in tables is makes retrieval efficient.

Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mathieson in view of Bisbee et al., Bertino et al, and the applicant's admitted prior art.

As to claim 26, Mathieson teaches a computer-implemented method of committing a transaction to a database, the method comprising:

intercepting transaction data at a computer system from a database transaction initiated between an application and the database in response to a user-created event monitored by the computer system that is triggered by the database transaction (see pages 9-10, "Document Routing Information", "When a document is assigned to a user, either for signature, or simply for information, the document status is updated.");

creating an electronic record with the computer system prior to committing the associated database transaction to the database (see Figure 11 and Figure 12, which display records of status information of documents);

storing the electronic record in a common repository of electronic records that provides an audit trail that cannot be altered or deleted by users of the system (see page 10, "information is maintained as a permanent record of all the actions that were performed on the document);

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executing a rule associated with the event to determine whether an electronic signature is required to connote review of the electronic record in order to commit the database transaction to the database (see pages 2-3, "Signature Rights Database"; "most financial documents require at least one signature to authorize payment... When the workflow reaches this step in the routing a special stored procedure is called which determines who has the right to sign for the expenditure according to our signature right database");

if execution of the rule results in a determination that an electronic signature is required, requesting, obtaining and verifying the electronic signature prior to committing the transaction into a database (see pages 2-3, "Signature Rights Database", "select the first person that has the right to sign and is not absent"); and

committing the transaction to the database in response to verifying the electronic signature (see figure 3, "End (Approved)").

Mathieson does not distinctly disclose:

wherein the electronic record comprises the intercepted transaction data prepared by the computer system using a set of XML mappings associated with the user-created-event as a well-formed XML document in a character large-object (CLOB) format of a column of a database table; and

displaying the transaction data in the electronic record according to a predefined layout set forth in an XSL style sheet associated with the electronic record and storing a copy of the transaction data as displayed in a character large-object (CLOB) format of a second column of the database table.

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Bisbee teaches the objects being XML documents, see paragraph 0071. Thus it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use XML as a well-known standard which provides the advantage of being easily supported.

However, it is not expressly stated in the above mentioned references how the data is stored within the database. Bertino et al. teaches the storage of an unstructured XML document as a column of a table as a CLOB data type, see page 86 column 1. Thus, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to include these features as it provides an organized method for storing the xml documents.

Mathieson as modified by Bisbee et al. and Bertino et al. still fails to expressly disclose how the data is presented to the user, and the data being stored in tables.

However, the applicant has admitted that use of XSL to provide a layout for displaying XML documents and the ability to store data in tables was well known in the art at the time of the invention. Thus it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have modified Mathieson to include these things because XSL is the standard language for determining XML document presentation and storing data in tables is makes retrieval efficient.

Response to Arguments

9. Applicant's arguments filed 3 March 2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to the applicant's arguments that the cited references fail to disclose "an electronic record at a computer system from intercepted transaction data prior to committing a

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database transaction to a database”, the arguments have been considered, but are not deemed persuasive. Mathieson teaches keeping a record of a document “as a permanent record of all of the actions that were performed on the document”. This record is created from the actions that occur before the record is approved and committed (signed and the end of the workflow is reached). Mathieson further discloses one of these actions being the system realizing that a signature is required and forwarding the record to the user that is authorized to sign it (intercepting). A separate procedure is called to perform this action (see page 3). Therefore, Mathieson does disclose this limitation.

In response to the applicant’s arguments that the cited references fail to disclose “executing a rule associated with the event at the first computer system to determine whether an electronic signature is required to connote review of the electronic record created from the intercepted transaction data in order to commit the database transaction to the database”, the arguments have been considered, but are not deemed persuasive. Mathieson teaches executing a rule to require and get a signature from an authorized party. It is assumed that the signature is performed by the authorized person when the authorized person has reviewed the document and made sure that it has been correctly filled out. Therefore, this limitation is taught by Mathieson.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jacob F. Bétit whose telephone number is (571)272-4075. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 9:30 am to 5:30 pm.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tony Mahmoudi can be reached on (571) 272-4078. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

/Jacob F B  tit/
Examiner, Art Unit 2169

jfb
10 May 2009